



# RAILRUNNER MAIL

www.nmrailrunner.com

Fall 2005



## TIMELINE

As we go to press

- Passenger cars arrive
- Station construction plans being finalized

Fall 2005

- Ordered locomotives to arrive
- Station construction to begin
- Draft fare policy and service schedule to be completed

Winter 2005

- RailRunner service to start



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## A MESSAGE FROM MRCOG'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The New Mexico RailRunner Express is just a few months away from being a regular sight in our region. The commuter line's importance lies in its ability to connect employees with employers, students with educational opportunities, and consumers and clients with goods and services. An efficient regional transportation system, after all, is an essential part of a healthy economy.


Transportation projections show that future roadway congestion will be particularly severe on I-25 both north and south of Albuquerque during peak travel hours. Even with nearly \$2 billion in new roadway

construction and improvement projects it will be nearly impossible to maintain reasonable traffic flows. The RailRunner not only offers an alternative to driving but to such traffic nightmares as exist in other large cities such as Denver and Salt Lake City.

Some of the most exciting economic impacts the RailRunner will bring are enhanced development opportunities in the areas surrounding the rail station. In other parts of the country, new rail stations have become centers of activity, stimulating economic growth and raising property values in the areas surrounding the stations. In New Mexico, com-



MRCOG Executive Director  
Lawrence Rael

muter rail holds tremendous potential for the cities, towns, and pueblos along the route and local leaders have been working closely with MRCOG to maximize the benefits commuter rail can bring to their communities. 

## FIRST RAILRUNNER CAR ARRIVES IN ALBUQUERQUE

The first of the 10 passenger cars ordered from Bombardier®, a Canadian railcar manufacturer, was completed in a record eight and a half months and arrived in

Albuquerque on August 30th. At the press conference called to announce its arrival to the public, New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson said: "The RailRunner is the future of public transportation in New Mexico. [It will] provide a safe, reliable

(continued on page 2)



MRCOG Executive Director Lawrence Rael addresses a crowd at a recent press conference to celebrate the arrival of the first RailRunner car in Albuquerque. From left to right: DOT Commissioners David Schultz and Greg Ortiz, Speaker of the House Ben Lujan, Bernalillo County Commissioner Alan Armijo, New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson, Albuquerque Mayor Martin Chavez, Lawrence Rael, and Transportation Secretary Rhonda Faught.

# RAILRUNNER PASSENGER CARS ARRIVE (continued from page 1)

**PASSENGER CARS  
WILL BE DELIVERED IN  
PHASES FROM AUGUST  
TO OCTOBER**


alternative to automobiles and take the pressure off our roads and highways.

In addition, the RailRunner will boost our economy by creating jobs and increasing tourism, and help our environment by reducing auto emissions."

Both the exterior and the interior design of the passenger cars were inspired by

New Mexico and its history: the roadrunner symbol and the red and yellow of the state flag and the historic Santa Fe Superchief. The cars are equipped with tables and electrical outlets, to make commuting as comfortable as possible; luggage and bicycle racks, allowing people to ride their bikes to and from the train; and ADA-compliant restrooms.

Each car seats 136 people and can travel at speeds up to 95 miles per hour.

Nine additional cars are in different stages of completion and are scheduled to be delivered by October. Each passenger car will receive an extensive inspection upon arrival in Albuquerque to ensure their safety and that no damage occurred during transport. 



## PROJECT UPDATE




A number of key steps in the development of the RailRunner has been completed.

- Contract operator Herzog Transit Services Inc. has been selected to be responsible for the day to day operations and maintenance of the trains.
- The bid for the construction of seven of the nine stations was released in

July. Responses are currently being reviewed and a decision will be made soon.

- Stations are now also planned at the Isleta and Sandia Pueblos.
- A manufacturer for the station's signage, which includes station name signs mounted on shade structures, entrance signs, and information kiosks, has been identified.

• With assistance from the Bernalillo County Arts Board Albuquerque area artist Chuck Dunbar was selected to design the artwork for the stations' windscreens. He is currently working with all local communities.

• Federal funds were programmed to cover the operating cost of RailRunner service for the first three years, sending it off to a great start. 

*Above left: The roadrunner head pictured on the side of the locomotive.*

*Left: MRCOG Executive Director Lawrence Rael, Santa Fe County Commission Chairman Mike Anaya, MRCOG Board Chairman M. Steve Anaya, House Majority Leader W. Ken Martinez; Santa Fe Mayor Larry Delgado; MRGCD Board Member Augusta Meyers; Bosque Farms Mayor Wayne Ake, and MRCOG's Director of Transportation and Planning Services, Chris Blewett pose in front of the first completed RailRunner locomotive.*

SANDOVAL COUNTY/  
US 550

DOWNTOWN  
BERNALILLO

ROY  
AND  
NM 313

NORTH VALLEY  
AT EDITH BLVD  
AND EL PUEBLO

ALVARADO  
1ST STR

Sandoval County

Bernalillo

Sandia Pueblo

Paseo/Journal Center

Downtown



## YOU ARE DOWNTOWN... NOW WHAT?

The Downtown Albuquerque RailRunner station will be located at the Alvarado Transportation Center (ATC). With nearly 20,000 jobs located within a 15-minute walk, and approximately 25,000 more a short bus ride away, this station will be the primary destination of many RailRunner travelers.

The ATC is already the center of ABQRide's services, including Rapid Ride, and is adjacent to the Greyhound and Amtrak stations.

To ensure that the RailRunner can get you to your final destination, MRCOG is

persuing a variety of connecting services.

One important connection is provided by Rapid Ride. The Rapid Ride bus stops at the ATC and runs every ten minutes along Central Avenue. Using the Rapid Ride, UNM is only five minutes away from the RailRunner.

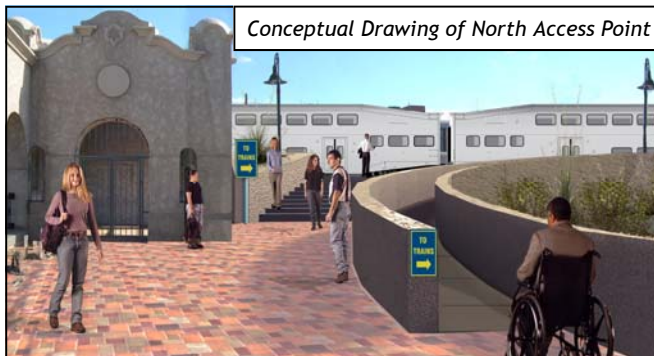
MRCOG is working with ABQRide to explore modifying its existing bus routes and schedules to ensure seamless connections between the rail and bus services. Destinations such as UNM and TVI may establish dedicated shuttles to run between the campuses and the ATC.



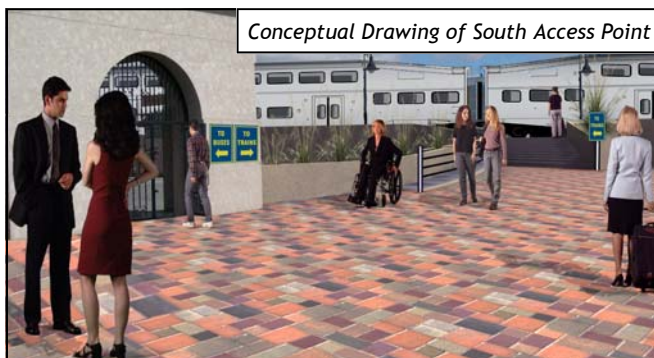
Rapid Ride Bus at Alvarado Transportation Center



ABQRide Bus at Alvarado Transportation Center



Conceptual Drawing of North Access Point



Conceptual Drawing of South Access Point

MRCOG is also exploring options for employers in Downtown Albuquerque and the North I-25 Corridor/Journal Center to provide their own shuttle service.

Convenient and direct pedestrian connections to and from the RailRunner platform are essential. After all, everyone will be a pedestrian after arriving at the station.

For this reason, new pedestrian access points at the ATC are planned for the north and south ends of the platform. The north access point will link the platform directly to the intersection of Central

Avenue and First Street, and provide direct access to Downtown Albuquerque, ABQRide, Rapid Ride, and the ATC waiting room.

The south access point will connect with the walkway included in the plans for "Alvarado Transportation Center II," which is currently under construction. From this walkway, direct access will be provided to the ABQRide bus terminal, the Greyhound station and its retail and foodservice space, and to Downtown Albuquerque.

Bicycle racks on board of the cars will allow people to ride their bikes to and from the stations.



DOWNTOWN  
TRANSPORTATION CENTER  
CENTRAL AVENUE

SOUTH VALLEY  
AT RIO BRAVO BLVD  
AND 2ND STREET

NM 47  
AND  
TRIBAL ROAD 15

COURTHOUSE ROAD  
AND  
NM 314

REINKEN ROAD  
AND  
WISCONSIN STREET.

Downtown Albuquerque

Rio Bravo/Airport

Isleta Pueblo

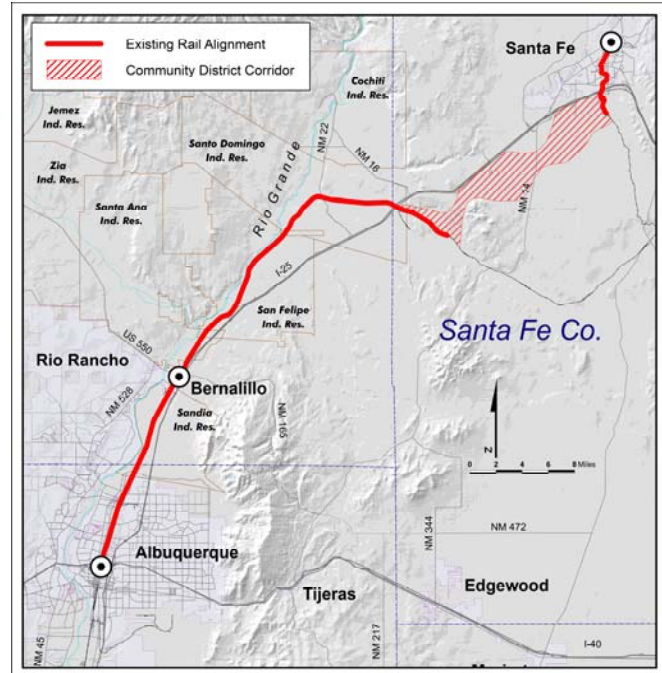
Los Lunas

Belen

## NORTH TO SANTA FE

The first major step in exploring the possibility of extending RailRunner service north to Santa Fe is nearing completion. MRCOG and the New Mexico Department of Transportation are in the process of completing the Alternatives Analysis. This analysis evaluated 17 different options for better connecting Albuquerque and Santa Fe, including new rail lines as well as additional roadway lanes. The Community District Rail Alignment (pictured on right) was recommended by the Technical Advisory Committee as the preferred alternative.

The next step is to obtain public input and a final decision on the preferred alternative by local elected officials. In the fall, additional environmental and engineering work on the preferred alternative will be conducted, followed by design and construction. The goal is to start commuter rail service by the end of 2008.



For more information about the RailRunner, or to schedule a presentation for your organization or group, contact Tony Sylvester at (505) 247-1750 ([tsylvester@mrcog-nm.gov](mailto:tsylvester@mrcog-nm.gov)).

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT [WWW.NMRAILRUNNER.COM](http://WWW.NMRAILRUNNER.COM)

**RAIL RUNNER MAIL**



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